

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

The present invention describes novel oligonucleotides targeted to nucleic acid sequences derived from *Cryptosporidium* organisms, and *Cryptosporidium parvum* organisms in particular, which are useful for determining the presence of *Cryptosporidium* organisms in a test sample. The oligonucleotides of the present invention include hybridization assay probes, helper probes and amplification primers. The present invention further describes a novel method for obtaining purified ribonucleic acid from viable oocysts.